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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/533,947	05/04/2005	Philippe Combette	271115US0PCT	9640
22850	7590	07/02/2008		
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314				
EXAMINER				
LEVKOVICH, NATALIA A				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1797				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
07/02/2008		ELECTRONIC		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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# Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/533,947

**Applicant(s)**

COMBETTE ET AL.

**Examiner**

NATALIA LEVKOVICH

**Art Unit**

1797

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03/04/2008.  
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.  
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-25 is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.  
7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 05/04/2005 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 06/27/2005  
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_  
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application  
6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Election/Restriction***

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Invention I (claims 1-10) in the reply filed 03/04/2008 is acknowledged. Upon further consideration, claims 11-14 have been REJOINED with claims 1-10.

Applicant states that "the Examiner has not provided any indication that the contents of the claims interpreted in light of the description was considered in making the assertion of a lack of unity ", since the "lack of unity "concept is based on the notion of "special technical features that defines a contribution which each of the inventions, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art". Applicants also states that claims 11-21 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, therefore, the restriction is improper. Applicant' further states that "the burden is on the Examiner to provide reasons and/or examples", to prove the lack of unity and the seriousness of burden if the Inventions are not restricted.

Examiner notes that, first, the 01/04/2008 Office Action shows that the inventions lack unity (and, therefore, are patentably distinct), since the technical feature, common for the identified inventions, does not constitute a special technical feature. The showing is based on the example of the prior art, and is in accordance with the traditional practice of the Office. Second, examination of the method claims 15-25 would require searches in classes 156 and 264, while examination of the apparatus claims 1-14 will be confined within classes 422 and 436. Thus, the two vast searches will not overlap. Examination

of all of the claim groups crafted by the Applicant, would, undoubtedly, impose a serious and undue burden on the Examiner. Finally, as admitted by Applicant, the restriction of independent OR distinct inventions is proper.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

### ***Drawings***

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims, as well as any structural detail that is essential for a proper understanding of the disclosed invention. Therefore, the hexagonal and the square mesh (commonly defined as one of the open spaces between the elements forming a net), must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering

of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being unclear for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 recites the "blocking elements allowing to block beads in interstices between said blocking elements in an ordered way and in stacks". It is unclear whether or not the intended structure implies any measuring and controlling features necessary for providing some pre-determined minimal amount of beads needed for forming at least a second layer of beads in the stacks. See also claim 10.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

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5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 1-5, 7-8 and 10-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) and (e) as anticipated by Yu et al. (US 20030091475).

With respect to claims 1-3, Yu discloses a bead trapping device for biotechnological applications, such as DNA analysis, or drug screening, comprising, as shown in Figure 7, a chamber [“tank”] formed by cap 78, seal 79 and substrate 70 accommodating integrally formed posts 74 [“blocking elements”] and inlets / outlets 77 [“import / output means”] - (see also [0002], [0005]).

Referring to claims 4-5, Figure 16 shows T-shaped posts arranged such as to form gaps of different sizes which can provide bead distribution as a function of bead diameter.

Regarding the “square mesh” of claim 7, see Figure 14A.

Referring to the shapes of the blocking element’s recited in claim 8, see the posts of Figures 14 and 15.

As to claim 10, Figures 14 A-B show the posts configured to allow bead stacking.

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With respect to claims 11-14, Yu discloses beads having both uniform and different sizes in [0029] and [0036]. As to the beads being functionalized differently or the same, the apparatus of Yu is configured for various biotechnological applications, such as DNA analysis, or drug screening (see above) which requires beads being functionalized in both fashions, depending on a particular goals of the testing.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

9 Claim 6 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yu et al in view of Petersen et al. (US 6893879).

Yu does not disclose a hexagonal shape for the mesh / post's transverse cross-section.

However, this shape of network forming elements is very common in the art. See, for example, posts 32 in Figure 8 of Petersen et al. It would have been within the ordinary skill of an artisan at the time the invention was made to have employed hexagonal posts / mesh in the modified apparatus of Yu, in order to increase the density of the post array, thus achieving higher productivity for the apparatus.

### ***Conclusion***

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Natalia Levkovich whose telephone number is 571-272-2462. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 2 p.m.-10 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Jill Warden/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1797